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Abstract

This research article presents clinical norms for the MKM Monocular and Binocular Reading Test, a stereoscope card test of nearpoint binocular coordination. 108 students in grades two, four, and six were screened. Of these, 93 were tested and normative data were established for monocular and binocular reading speed and errors for each grade level. The results reveal the presence of a developmental trend with older students demonstrating significantly faster scores with fewer errors. Binocular performance on the test was slower than monocular at all grade levels.

Degree Type

Thesis

Degree Name

Master of Science in Vision Science

Committee Chair

Bradley Coffey, O.D.

Keywords

MKM Monocular and Binocular Reading Test, Binocular Vision, SORT

Subject Categories

Optometry

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MKM NORMS: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GRADES 2, 4, AND 6

BY

RANDALL D. JECH, BSHH

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the
College of Optometry
Pacific University
Forest Grove, Oregon
for the degree of
Doctor of Optometry
May, 1989

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The authors wish to thank Anita McLain of Pacific University's Education Department for acting so effectively as liason with the two elementary schools involved in the study: Gaston Elementary and Farmington View Elementary. Sincere gratitude to Don Wells and Marilyn McGlaffson, the principals of the aforementioned schools, respectively, for their support and cooperation.

ABSTRACT:

This research article presents clinical norms for the MKM Monocular and Binocular Reading Test, a stereoscope card test of nearpoint binocular coordination.

108 students in grades two, four, and six were screened. Of these, 93 were tested and normative data were established for monocular and binocular reading speed and errors for each grade level.

The results reveal the presence of a developmental trend with older students demonstrating significantly faster scores with fewer errors. Binocular performance on the test was slower than monocular at all grade levels.

KEY WORDS: MKM Monocular and Binocular Reading Test, Binocular
Vision, SORT

INTRODUCTION/TEXT

Of the 51.5 million school-aged children in the United States, an estimated 5 to 15% (2.5 to 7.5 million) have some type of learning disorder.¹ Many diagnostic labels have been developed over the past 30 years for these children: dyslexia, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction (MBD), hyperkinesis, perceptual defects, and attention deficit disorder (ADD).¹

It is estimated that, nationwide, one of every six children is two or more grade levels behind in reading.^{2,3,4} Optometrists have found that approximately 80% of these "slow readers" have difficulty in control and coordination of their eyes even though most have 20/20 visual acuity.²

The MKM Monocular and Binocular Reading Test (see appendix A) was designed in the mid 1960's to detect problems associated with poor binocular coordination and macular suppression. It consists of three cards with appropriate age-related words which are placed in a telebinocular and presented in the order: left eye, right eye, both eyes. As a patient reads the cards aloud, the examiner records any errors and time taken to read each card.

By analyzing each score sheet, the examiner can determine which errors were common to both eyes, or which errors were made with the right or left eye alone. The presence of word reversals (was for saw), vertical reversals (but for put), internal reversals (there for three), and other errors can be noted.

For the two monocular cards, the reading time and the number of errors is expected to be approximately the same for each eye. If the child has good binocular performance, he/she will read all of the words on the last binocular card in the proper sequence without hesitation. If the child has difficulty with binocular fusion, he/she will report that the "words run together". If the child has a tendency toward suppression, (one eye "turns off") he/she will omit words.

If the suppression is constant, generally the right or left eye will be completely suppressed throughout the binocular test. If no suppression is noted and binocular fusion is attained, the binocular reading time can be compared to the monocular part of the test. If the time is appreciably longer under binocular conditions, the presence of a binocular vision

problem is suggested.⁵ In cases of strabismus (one eye is misaligned relative to the other) and amblyopia (significantly reduced visual acuity in one eye relative to the other), a complete suppression of the nonfixating eye is expected. These cases require vision training to correct the deviating eye and improve its acuity respectively. In cases of suppression unrelated to strabismus and amblyopia, improved performance is often made possible immediately with the application of plus lenses at near.

Performance norms for the MKM have never been published. Normative scores provided by the test developers are inadequate as they have been based on data acquired from very small samples ($n = 15-20$ students per grade level) at a private religious school and are averages of monocular and binocular scores.

The purpose of this study was to establish reliable monocular and binocular norms for the MKM regarding reading speed and errors for three grade levels, second, fourth, and sixth, and to determine if developmental trends are present in the tested abilities.

METHOD:

Subjects: A total of 108 students participated in the study from two rural elementary schools in Western Oregon. 93 of the 108 students passed an initial screening: 31 second graders, 32 fourth graders, and 30 sixth graders. An informed consent form, signed by each child's parent/guardian, was required prior to participation in the study.

Procedure: Data were gathered in the following sequence. Specific test protocols follow.

- 1) Student name, age, grade, and whether the student wears reading glasses.
- 2) Visual acuity at near
- 3) Slosson Oral Reading Test
- 4) MKM
- 5) Keystone Telebinocular lateral phoria at near

Static Visual Acuity At Near

Instrumentation: Standard Snellen card and occluder

Procedure: Measure and record VA's for OD, OS, and OU at 40 cm.

Passing Criterion: 20/40 or better for each eye

Basic Sight Word Vocabulary

Instrumentation: Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) - The SORT consists of a series of grade-appropriate word lists from preschool through high school and is used to ascertain whether a child's sight word vocabulary is at his/her grade level.

Procedure: Begin each child with a list of words appropriate to his/her grade level, held at the child's habitual reading distance. For example, second graders begin with list #2, fourth graders from list #4, and sixth graders from list #6. Occasionally, a child has difficulty calling the word list appropriate to his/her grade level and it is necessary to go to a lower grade level word list. Follow

the standard instruction set on the SORT test sheet (see Appendix B) and allow the child to proceed through the word lists. A child's sight word vocabulary is determined by counting the number of correct responses then multiplying by .05.

Passing Criterion: Second graders had to have a SORT reading level of at least 1.0 while fourth and sixth graders required at least 3.0. This is due to the fact that there are two sets of MKM cards. Set #1 consists of vocabulary words appropriate for first and second graders; set #2 is for third grade and beyond.

MKM Monocular And Binocular Reading Test

Instrumentation: Keystone Telebinocular and the two sets of MKM cards.

Procedure: Adjust the Telebinocular card holder for near (2.50 D) testing. Seat the child comfortably in front of the stereoscope adjusting the height if necessary. Have the child look into the scope to make sure he/she can see the words. Be certain the correct MKM card set is being used for the child's grade level. Use the standard MKM instruction set (see Appendix B).

Record time and errors for each card.

Passing Criterion: Binocular performance on the third MKM card.

Keystone Lateral Phoria At Near

Instrumentation: Telebinocular and Keystone Lateral phoria card (DB9B)

Procedure: Immediately following the MKM test, take a lateral phoria by asking to which number the arrow points.

RESULTS:

Table 1 lists means and standard deviations by grade level for OD, OS, and OU reading time and errors. In all cases means and their standard deviations show a decrease with increasing grade level, indicating better, more consistent performance among older children. Monocularly, no significant differences exist between OD and OS at any grade level. Since OD and OS values were similar, they were combined as monocular data in table 2.

Table 2 shows a consistent difference ($F > 5.5$ in all comparisons, $p < .001$) between monocular and binocular reading times with slower binocular times at each grade level. Also illustrated are significant differences ($F > 1.80$ in all comparisons, $p < .02$) for monocular vs. binocular errors with approximately twice as many errors binocularly. These differences are shown graphically in Figures 1 and 2.

Evidence for the presence of an age-related developmental trend on MKM performance is also shown in Table 2. With regard to the monocular data, both time ($F > 8.3$, $p < .001$) and errors ($F > 4.1$, $p < .02$) show significant improvement with increased age. The predominant effect is due to differences in second graders vs. fourth and sixth graders; fourth and sixth graders show no significant differences on any measure. The binocular data show similar trends for time ($F = 9.3$, $p < .001$), however the comparison between grades for binocular errors was not significant ($F = 2.3$, $p > .05$).

Scores on the SORT, not surprisingly, showed significant differences ($F = 86.7$, $p < .00$) between all grade levels. Subjects in our sample scored approximately 1.5 years above the grade equivalency listed in the SORT norms for each grade level.

Post-test lateral phoria data did not differ ($F = .37$, $p > .05$) between grades.

Table 3 displays SORT raw score means, grade equivalent means, and phoria data per grade level.

DISCUSSION:

As indicated by the data in Tables 1 and 2, means for reading times and errors show a decrease with increasing grade level. This apparent developmental trend demonstrates a visual cognitive maturational effect among the children in our sample, and provides a degree of support for the clinical adage that, "In the second grade, a child is still learning to read, but by the fourth grade is reading to learn." Our data show a significant difference in MKM word-naming fluency between second graders and the older subjects.

Differences in monocular/binocular reading time (30 seconds for grades two and four; 20 seconds for grade six) are also evident in the results. The reduced difference for the sixth graders may reflect visual maturational processes related to stability of binocular fusion. Differences in phoric posture between grade levels were absent and therefore were not responsible for the sixth graders' reduced difference in monocular/binocular scores. The presence of monocular/binocular differences per se suggests that the binocular portion of the MKM places greater overall demands upon the visual system than are present in the monocular portion of the test. This phenomenon is likely due to the reduced fusional stimuli (relative to real-world visual targets) of the binocular MKM test card. Individuals with limited fusional capability or high heterophoria have difficulty with the binocular portion of the MKM and are thus revealed to the clinician in the context of an evaluation procedure related to classroom demands. We calculate the fusional demand of the binocular MKM card to be approximately $.8^{\Delta}$ base out at the Telebinocular shaft setting of 2.5 D. This demand value may have been designed to counter the effect of proximal convergence, and does not constitute an inordinate fusional demand relative to ortho.

The increased difficulty of the binocular portion of the test was also evident in terms of error frequency. Binocular reading errors were twice those of monocular errors at all grade levels. During the study, some students suppressed on the binocular card and their performance could not be included. Others who experienced difficulty at this point needed simply to rest

their eyes for a moment by looking off into the distance. Once rested, they were able to resume and finish the test satisfactorily.

Subjects in all three grades scored approximately one and a half years better in their basic sight word vocabulary than expected by SORT norms (Table 3). The research was conducted one third of the way into the school year which accounts for roughly a half year advantage. The question remains as to whether the SORT norms have become outdated, or whether the students in our sample are developmentally advanced relative to the SORT norming population.

We conclude that the MKM Monocular/Binocular Reading Test remains a useful test of binocular performance, and has additional utility in demonstrating binocular inefficiency to patients or parents, and in demonstrating improvements in binocularity associated with optometric treatment. The mere presence of monocular/binocular performance differences does not necessarily indicate poor binocular vision, however. The magnitude and character of the differences should be considered in light of other clinical diagnostic data and normative data for the test. We believe that the MKM may be useful also with older children and adults, and suggest the development of a similar test with age-appropriate vocabulary words for these populations.

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Reference Note: The MKM Monocular and Binocular Reading Test can be obtained from:
MKM Reading System
809 Kansas City St.
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701-2698
1-605-342-7223

GRADE	n	OD				OS				OU			
		TIME (SEC.)		ERRORS		TIME (SEC.)		ERRORS		TIME (SEC.)		ERRORS	
		\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ
2	31	123.5	59.3	4.6	5.3	131.2	68.6	4.8	4.9	155.5	70.5	7.4	5.9
4	32	88.6	45.8	2.4	2.5	90.3	35.1	2.8	2.5	117.1	49.9	5.2	4.7
6	30	76.5	30.3	2.2	2.4	77.1	26.4	2.0	2.3	97.8	35.4	4.8	4.0

TABLE 1 : NORMS FOR GRADES 2, 4, AND 6.

GRADE	n	MONOCULAR				BINOCULAR			
		TIME		ERRORS		TIME		ERRORS	
		\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ
2	31	127.4	63.2	4.7	5.0	155.5	70.5	7.4	5.9
4	32	89.4	40.5	2.6	2.5	117.1	49.9	5.2	4.7
6	30	76.8	28.2	2.1	2.3	97.8	35.4	4.8	4.0

TABLE 2 : MONOCULAR AND BINOCULAR MEANS
WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS

GRADE	SORT			PHORIA	
	RAW SCORE MEAN	ST. DEV	GRADE EQ.	MEAN	ST. DEV
2	69.1	22.0	3.5	4.5	.80
4	113.7	22.4	3.7	4.6	.75
6	148.7	26.5	7.4	4.4	.75

TABLE 3: SORT AND PHORIA DATA BY GRADE

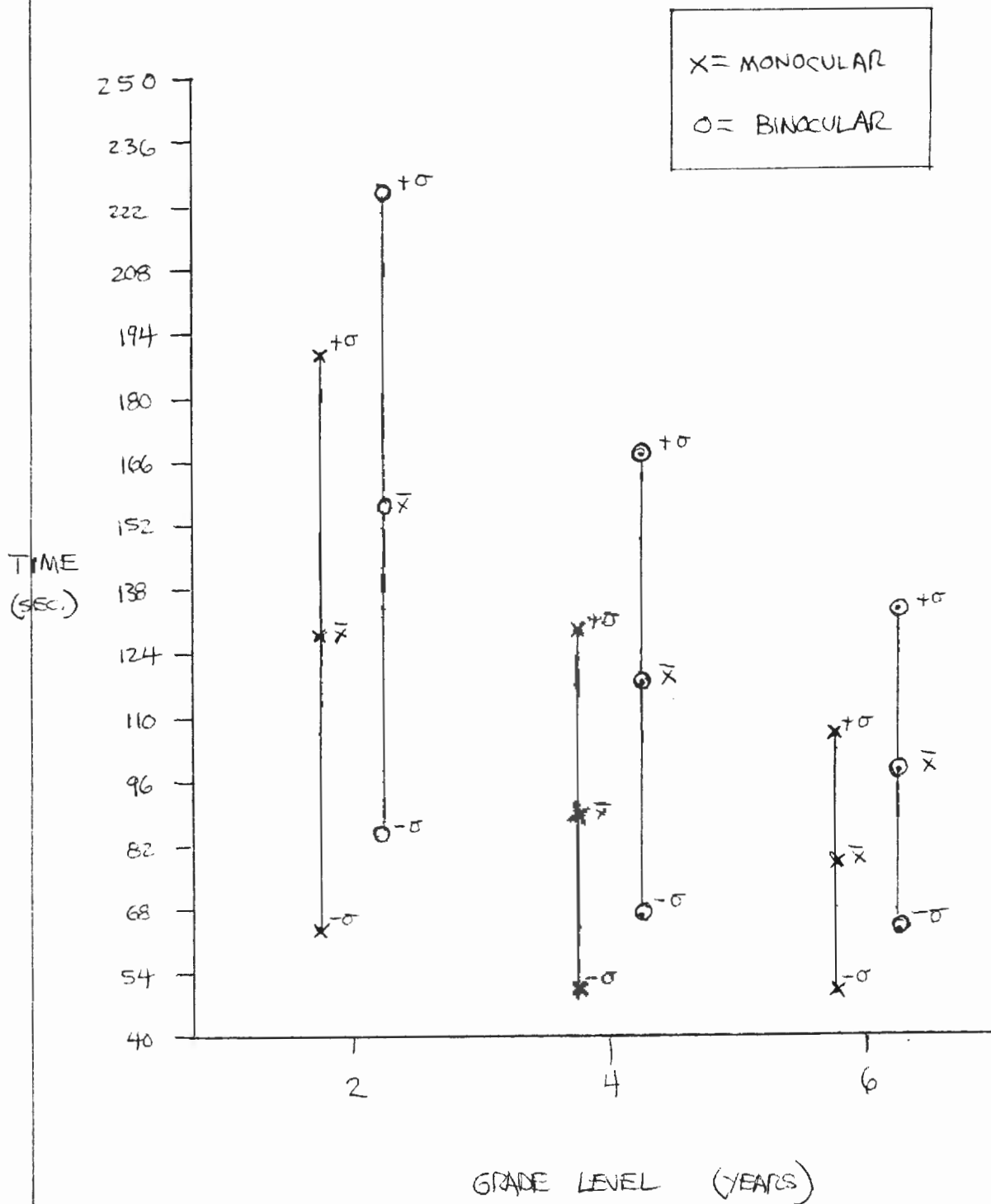


FIGURE 1 MONOCULAR AND BINOCULAR READING TIME MEANS GRAPHED WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR GRADES 2, 4, AND 6.

42, 482, 170 SHEETS 2 SQUARE
42, 389, 230 SHEETS 5 SQUARE

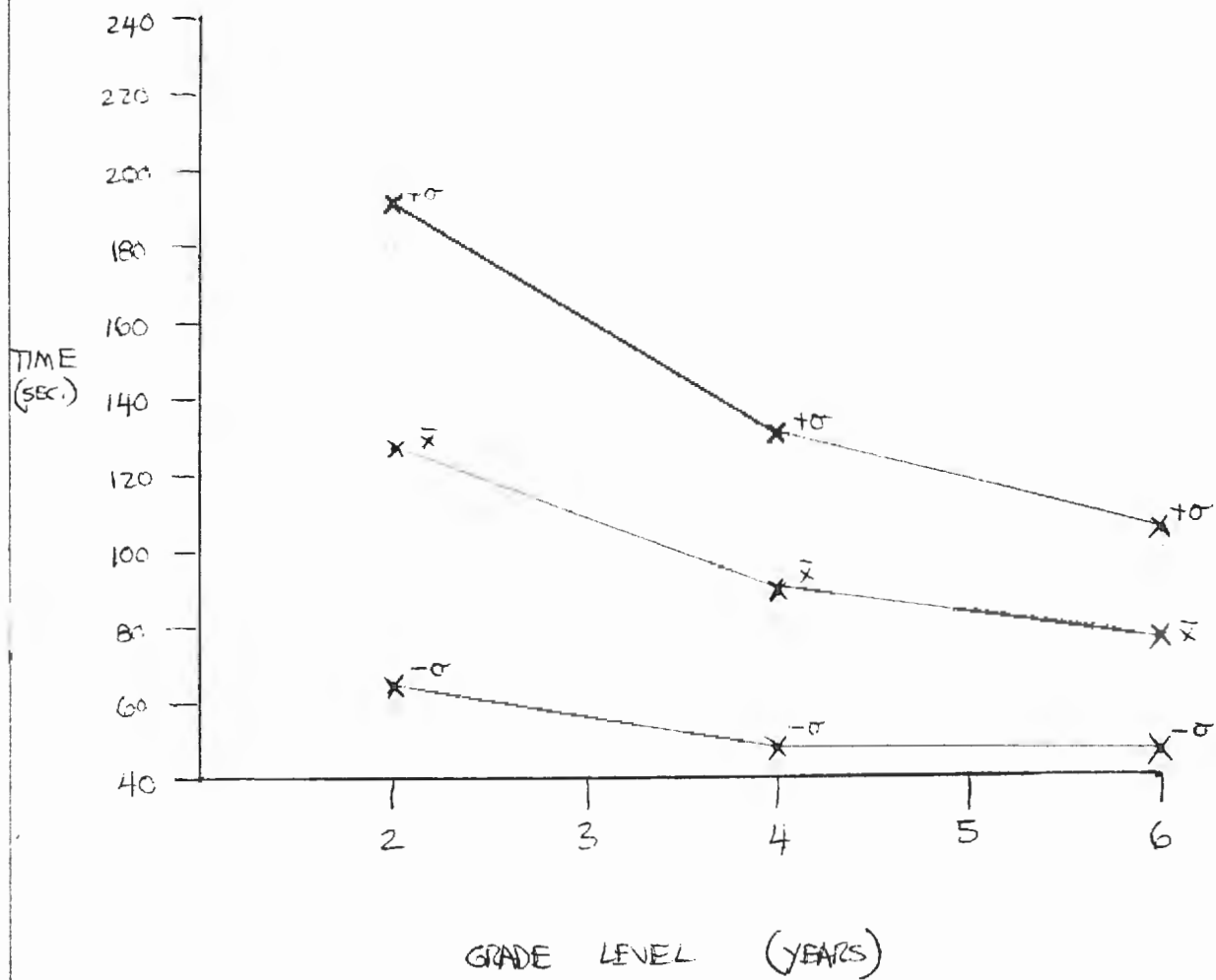


FIGURE 3 MONOCULAR READING TIME MEANS WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS TO ALLOW PROJECTED MEANS FOR GRADES 3 AND 5.

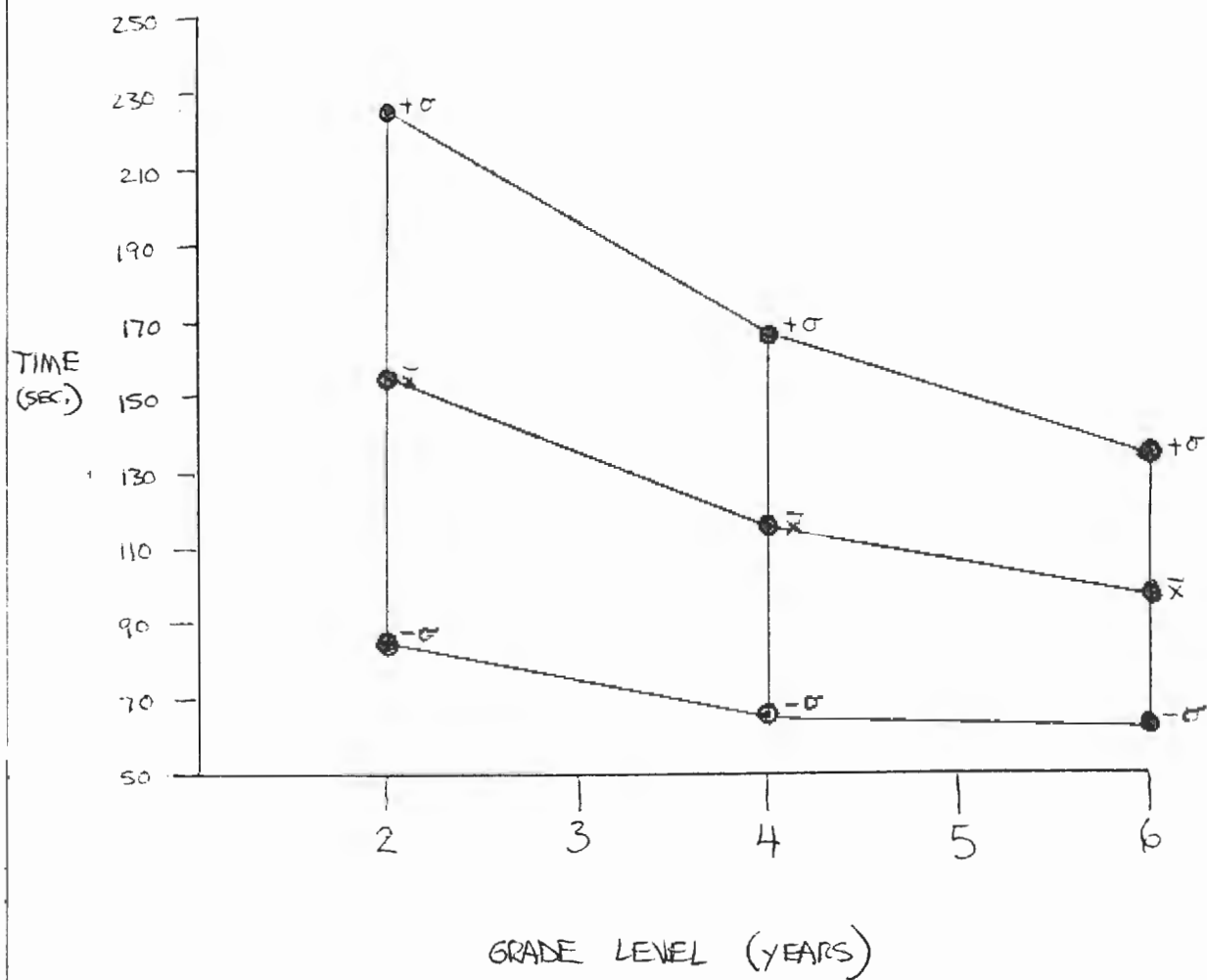


FIGURE 4 BINOOCULAR READING TIME MEANS WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS TO ALLOW PROJECTED MEANS FOR GRADES 3 AND 5.

Set 2 - No. 1

well always got hold
would let eight sing
those before far hurt
much off west made
say sit six why gone
say new done our try
how been were fall
open them keep grow
once sleep gave seven
live ask tell became
wash pick laugh myself
cut very which they
found drew today please
hot better wish kind
small drink now both
clean could where own
light warm write us
pull think every these
done buy them walk
together or show read
think right first pretty
four most many never
their ate upon work
take start while bring
only just shall round
long full again best
when about there use

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Set 2 - No. 2

use there about when
best again full long
round shall just only
being white start take
work upon ate their
never many must four
pretty first right think
read above or together
walk then buy done
these every think pull
to write warm light
own where could clean
both now drink small
kind wish better last
please today draw found
they which very cut
myself laugh pick wash
because tell ask live
seven gave sleep once
grow keep them open
fall eyes been how
try our done new say
gone why six sit any
made west off much
hurt far before those
sing eight let would
hold got always well

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Set 2 - No. 3

well always got hold
would let eight sing
those before far hurt
much off west made
say sit six why gone
say new done our try
how been were fall
open them keep grow
once sleep gave seven
live ask tell became
wash pick laugh myself
cut very which they
found drew today please
hot better wish kind
small drink now both
clean could where own
light warm write us
pull think every these
done buy them walk
together or show read
think right first pretty
four most many never
their ate upon work
take start while bring
only just shall round
long full again best
when about there use

well always got hold
would let eight sing
those before far hurt
much off west made
say sit six why gone
say new done our try
how been were fall
open them keep grow
once sleep gave seven
live ask tell became
wash pick laugh myself
cut very which they
found drew today please
hot better wish kind
small drink now both
clean could where own
light warm write us
pull think every these
done buy them walk
together or show read
think right first pretty
four most many never
their ate upon work
take start while bring
only just shall round
long full again best
when about there use

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Takes about 3 minutes
to give and to score.

SLOSSON ORAL READING TEST (SORT)

Copyright © 1963, Richard L. Slosson, M.A.

Keep this test in
safe drawer or file.

This Oral Reading Test is to be given individually and is based on the ability to pronounce words at different levels of difficulty. The words have been taken from standardized school readers and the Reading Level obtained from testing represents median or standardized school achievement. A correlation of .96 (variability on a group of 108 children from first grade thru high school: Gray Mean = 5.0, SORT Mean = 5.0, Gray S.D. = 2.0, SORT S.D. = 2.3) was obtained with the Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs by William S. Gray, published by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana. Permission to use this test by Gray for purposes of validation is deeply appreciated.

A reliability coefficient of .99 (test-retest interval of one week) shows that this Oral Reading Test can be used at frequent intervals to measure a child's progress in reading, providing no specific coaching with these particular words has been given. Such periodic testing can be highly motivating.

DIRECTIONS

1. Allow the child to read from one sheet while you keep score on another. At the start, say the following: "I want to see how many of these words you can read. Please begin here and read each word aloud as carefully as you can." (Indicate at what list to start.) "When you come to a difficult word, do the best you can and if you can't read it, say 'blank' and go on to the next one."

2. Start a child with a list where you think he can pronounce all 20 words in that one list correctly. Note that each list of words is graded. List P (primer) is for the first few months of first grade, List 1 is for the balance of first grade, List 2 is for second grade, etc. If the starting list is too difficult and the child makes even one mistake, go back until you reach an easier list where he can pronounce all 20 words correctly.

3. After you have found the starting list, go on into more advanced lists until you find the stopping list, where he mispronounces or is unable to read all 20 words. When you reach a point where the words become very difficult, say: "Look quickly down this list and read the words you think you know."

4. When a child reads very slowly and takes more than 5 seconds on each and every word, move him along by saying the "blank" for him. Or call out the number of the word at a rate of about 5 seconds

each. Still another plan is to use a small card or piece of paper, covering up a word after a 5 second exposure, forcing him on to the next word.

5. Count as an error each mispronounced or omitted word as well as a word which takes more than about 5 seconds to pronounce. (If a child has a speech defect such as a stutter, disregard the 5 second interval and allow as much time as necessary.) Count it an error when a child is uncertain about a word and gives more than one pronunciation, even though one of them may have been correct. Be particularly careful about scoring the word endings as they must be absolutely correct. Keep score by putting a check mark (✓) after each error or a plus sign (+) after each correct word. Enter the number of correct words at the bottom of each list as you go along. An analysis of scatter on the test, as well as an analysis of the types of errors made, will indicate areas of weakness.

6. To find a child's raw score for reading, count the total number of words he was able to pronounce correctly in all lists and add the words below the starting list for which he automatically receives credit. To obtain the Reading Level, look up the value of this raw score in Table 1 below. A simple way to determine the Reading Level is to take half the raw score. For example, if the raw score were 46, half of this number would be 23 and the Reading Level would be 2.3 or the 3rd month of 2nd grade.

TABLE I

CHANGING THE RAW SCORE TO READING LEVEL

(Reading Grade Level is given in years and months. For example, 5.2 means the 2nd month of 5th grade.)

SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE
0-1	0.0	26-27	1.3	52-53	2.6	78-79	3.9	104-105	5.2	130-131	6.5	156-157	7.8
2-3	0.1	28-29	1.4	54-55	2.7	80-81	4.0	106-107	5.3	132-133	6.6	158-159	7.9
4-5	0.2	30-31	1.5	56-57	2.8	82-83	4.1	108-109	5.4	134-135	6.7	160-161	8.0
6-7	0.3	32-33	1.6	58-59	2.9	84-85	4.2	110-111	5.5	136-137	6.8	162-163	8.1
8-9	0.4	34-35	1.7	60-61	3.0	86-87	4.3	112-113	5.6	138-139	6.9	164-165	8.2
10-11	0.5	36-37	1.8	62-63	3.1	88-89	4.4	114-115	5.7	140-141	7.0	166-167	8.3
12-13	0.6	38-39	1.9	64-65	3.2	90-91	4.5	116-117	5.8	142-143	7.1	168-169	8.4
14-15	0.7	40-41	2.0	66-67	3.3	92-93	4.6	118-119	5.9	144-145	7.2	170-171	8.5
16-17	0.8	42-43	2.1	68-69	3.4	94-95	4.7	120-121	6.0	146-147	7.3	172-173	8.6
18-19	0.9	44-45	2.2	70-71	3.5	96-97	4.8	122-123	6.1	148-149	7.4	174-175	8.7
20-21	1.0	46-47	2.3	72-73	3.6	98-99	4.9	124-125	6.2	150-151	7.5	176-177	8.8
22-23	1.1	48-49	2.4	74-75	3.7	100-101	5.0	126-127	6.3	152-153	7.6	178-179	8.9
24-25	1.2	50-51	2.5	76-77	3.8	102-103	5.1	128-129	6.4	154-155	7.7	180-200	H.S.

Takes about 3 minutes
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each. Still another plan is to use a small card or piece of paper, covering up a word after a 5 second exposure, forcing him on to the next word.

5. Count as an error each mispronounced or omitted word as well as a word which takes more than about 5 seconds to pronounce. (If a child has a speech defect such as a stutter, disregard the 5 second interval and allow as much time as necessary.) Count it an error when a child is uncertain about a word and gives more than one pronunciation, even though one of them may have been correct. Be particularly careful about scoring the word endings as they must be absolutely correct. Keep score by putting a check mark (✓) after each error or a plus sign (+) after each correct word. Enter the number of correct words at the bottom of each list as you go along. An analysis of scatter on the test, as well as an analysis of the types of errors made, will indicate areas of weakness.

6. To find a child's raw score for reading, count the total number of words he was able to pronounce correctly in all lists and add the words below the starting list for which he automatically receives credit. To obtain the Reading Level, look up the value of this raw score in Table 1 below. A simple way to determine the Reading Level is to take half the raw score. For example, if the raw score were 46, half of this number would be 23 and the Reading Level would be 2.3 or the 3rd month of 2nd grade.

TABLE I

CHANGING THE RAW SCORE TO READING LEVEL

(Reading Grade Level is given in years and months. For example, 5.2 means the 2nd month of 5th grade.)

SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE	SCORE	GRADE
0-1	0.0	26-27	1.3	52-53	2.6	78-79	3.9	104-105	5.2	130-131	6.5	156-157	7.8
2-3	0.1	28-29	1.4	54-55	2.7	80-81	4.0	106-107	5.3	132-133	6.6	158-159	7.9
4-5	0.2	30-31	1.5	56-57	2.8	82-83	4.1	108-109	5.4	134-135	6.7	160-161	8.0
6-7	0.3	32-33	1.6	58-59	2.9	84-85	4.2	110-111	5.5	136-137	6.8	162-163	8.1
8-9	0.4	34-35	1.7	60-61	3.0	86-87	4.3	112-113	5.6	138-139	6.9	164-165	8.2
10-11	0.5	36-37	1.8	62-63	3.1	88-89	4.4	114-115	5.7	140-141	7.0	166-167	8.3
12-13	0.6	38-39	1.9	64-65	3.2	90-91	4.5	116-117	5.8	142-143	7.1	168-169	8.4
14-15	0.7	40-41	2.0	66-67	3.3	92-93	4.6	118-119	5.9	144-145	7.2	170-171	8.5
16-17	0.8	42-43	2.1	68-69	3.4	94-95	4.7	120-121	6.0	146-147	7.3	172-173	8.6
18-19	0.9	44-45	2.2	70-71	3.5	96-97	4.8	122-123	6.1	148-149	7.4	174-175	8.7
20-21	1.0	46-47	2.3	72-73	3.6	98-99	4.9	124-125	6.2	150-151	7.5	176-177	8.8
22-23	1.1	48-49	2.4	74-75	3.7	100-101	5.0	126-127	6.3	152-153	7.6	178-179	8.9
24-25	1.2	50-51	2.5	76-77	3.8	102-103	5.1	128-129	6.4	154-155	7.7	180-200	H.S.

